

REMARKS

The present application was filed on April 6, 2007 with claims 1-31. Prior to amendments and cancellations made herein, claims 1-31 were pending and claims 1, 11, 21, 24, and 27 were the pending independent claims.

In the present Office Action, claims 1-5, 7-15, 17-23 and 27-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over WO 2004/053889 to Reiner (hereinafter “Reiner”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6909632 to Forbes et al. (hereinafter “Forbes”) and U.S. Publication Charging and Discharging Properties of Electron Traps Created by Hot-Carrier Injection in Gate Oxide on n-Channel Metal Oxide Semiconductor Field Effect Transistor to Vuillaume et al. (hereinafter “Vuillaume”). Claim 24 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Publication No. 20040027877 to Kotz et al. (hereinafter “Kotz”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6888749 to Forbes (hereinafter “Forbes-2”). Claims 25-26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kotz in view of Forbes-2, and further in view of Reiner in view of Forbes and Vuillaume.

In the present Office Action, Claims 6 and 16 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. However, the Examiner recites that claims 6 and 16 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In this response, Applicants amend the claims; cancel claims 3, 5, 6, 13, 15, 16, 23-26 and 29-30. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the amendments, cancellations and remarks to follow.

Applicants have amended independent claim 1 to include the subject matter of claims 3, 5 and 6. That is, claim 1 is amended to include the subject matter from claim 6 that the Examiner indicated as allowable and subject matter from claims 3 and 5 that were intervening between claim 6 and independent claim 1 prior to any amendments or cancellations made herein. Thus, claim 1 is amended to recite that said altered characteristic is a change in a threshold voltage of said at least one of said transistors, and to further recite that the method further comprises detecting said programmed at least one of said transistors by sensing said change in said threshold voltage of said at least one of said transistors; wherein said detecting step comprises

the steps of (i) raising a source terminal for each of said array of transistors to a positive potential, (ii) raising a gate terminal for all transistors along a selected row to a positive potential and (iii) detecting whether a drain voltage changes from a precharge voltage level to approximately a cell transistor threshold voltage below said positive gate terminal potential.

Applicants have amended independent claim 11 to include the subject matter of claims 13, 15 and 16. That is, claim 11 is amended to include the subject matter from claim 16 that the Examiner indicated as allowable and subject matter from claims 13 and 15 that were intervening between claim 16 and independent claim 11 prior to any amendments or cancellations made herein. Thus, claim 11 is amended to recite that said altered characteristic is a change in a threshold voltage of said at least one of said transistors, and to further recite that said circuit senses said change in said threshold voltage of said at least one of said transistors, and wherein said circuit (i) raises a source terminal for each of said array of transistors to a positive potential, (ii) raises a gate terminal for all transistors along a selected row to a positive potential and (iii) detects whether a drain voltage changes from a precharge voltage level to approximately a cell transistor threshold voltage below said positive gate potential.

In a similar fashion, Applicants have amended independent claims 21 and 27 to include similar limitations.

Consequently, Applicants have amended claims 4, 7, 14, 17, 22 and 31 to correspond to amendments in their respective independent claims.

Applicants amend claim 10 replacing “the voltage on at least one column” with “a voltage on at least one column” because there is no previous reference in the depended upon claims to “voltage on at least one column.”

Support for the amendments can be found in the Specification of Applicants at, for example, page 4, lines 7-16; page 4, lines 28-31; page 5, lines 15 to page 6, line 12 and in FIGS. 5A and 5B item 500.

Because of inclusion of subject matter from claims 3, 5 and 6 into independent claims 1, subject matter from claims 13, 15 and 16 into independent claim 11, subject matter from claim 23 into independent claim 21, and subject matter from claims 29 and 30 into independent claim

27, claims 3, 5, 6, 13, 15, 16, 23, 29 and 30 have been cancelled. Additionally claims 24-26 have been cancelled.

Dependent claims 2, 4, 7-10, 12, 14, 17-20, 22, 28 and 31 are patentable at least by virtue of dependency on their respective independent claim.

In light of the above remarks and amendments, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-2, 4, 7-12, 14, 17-22, 27-28 and 31 are in condition for allowance and request the withdrawal of the §103(a) rejections and the objections due to dependency upon a rejected base claim.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kevin M. Mason".

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